

Bright Introduces Constitutional Amendment to Balance the Budget

WASHINGTON,

DC - Congressman Bobby Bright will introduce legislation today that will call for a Constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget. A balanced budget amendment is a key component of the Blue Dog Coalition's recently-introduced Blueprint for Fiscal Reform. The amendment has 35 original co-sponsors, all members of the fiscally conservative coalition.

"Balancing

the budget is a simple concept that Alabama families follow every day, but unfortunately the federal government doesn't play by the same rules," Bright said. "My amendment is an essential part of our larger efforts to bring real and effective fiscal reform to government. There are many steps that must be taken to improve our fiscal health, but balancing the budget on a yearly basis is the only way to ensure that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past that have created our current situation. Passing a Constitutional amendment is a long process, but it is absolutely necessary to ensure America remains strong for generations."

Specifically, the Bright Amendment would:

- Require Congress to produce a balanced budget every fiscal year.

- Require the President to submit a balanced budget in his or her annual transmission to Congress.

Prohibit outlays for a fiscal year from exceeding total receipts for that fiscal year unless Congress, by a three-fifths roll call vote of each House, authorizes a specific excess of outlays over receipts (in cases of emergencies, for instance).

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Protect Social Security benefits, ensuring that our most vulnerable are not subject to a reduction in their guaranteed benefits when they need them the most.

Balancing the budget is an attainable goal. From 1998-2001, our country achieved balanced budgets through adherence to PAYGO, limits on discretionary spending, sensible tax policies and investments in smart, pro-growth policies. Forty-nine states currently require an annual balanced budget, and an amendment to the Constitution will finally hold the federal government to the same, commonsense standard. The recent enactment of PAYGO is a good first step to achieving balanced budgets, but a mandated balanced budget is an even firmer, more concrete way to ensure that government lives within its means. The Blue Dogs' goal is to balance the budget by 2020.

For a Constitutional amendment to become law, two-thirds of both houses of Congress must pass the amendment. After passage, three-fourths (or 38) of the states must agree to the amendment by either approving it through their legislatures or by a ratifying convention. Congressman Bright's amendment sets the time period for state ratification at seven years. The last time a balanced budget amendment was seriously considered was 1995, when it passed the House but failed by a single vote in the Senate.

"Fiscal conservatives have pushed a balanced budget for years, and there is no better time to act on this important goal," Bright said. "Balancing the budget will force Congress to make tough decisions, and to achieve a balanced budget, we must begin to cut spending. I strongly believe enacting and adhering to the Blue Dogs' proposals will help achieve the goal of living within our means and bringing fiscal responsibility back to Washington."

Blue Dog Blueprint_for_Fiscal_Reform

Balanced Budget Amendment

Balanced_Budget_Amendment_Original_Co-Sponsors